

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A low temperature rendering process for converting animal trimmings to meat product, said low temperature rendering process comprising steps of:

(a) surface treating animal trimmings in a bath with a heat transfer fluid provided at a temperature between about 80°C and about 150°C for between about 25 seconds and about 150 seconds to provide surface treated animal trimmings;

(b) heating said surface treated animal trimmings in a heat exchanger having a first[[-]] in and first[[-]]out arrangement to a temperature in the range of about 30°C and about 50°C to form a heated slurry; and

(c) ~~feeding the heated slurry to a decanter and~~ separating the heated slurry into a solids stream and a liquids stream, the solids stream containing an increased weight[[-]]percent of protein ~~and moisture~~ compared with the weight[[-]]percent of protein ~~and moisture~~ in the heated slurry, and the liquids stream containing an increased weight[[-]]percent of tallow[[,]] and water[[-]]soluble proteins, ~~and moisture~~ compared with the weight[[-]]percent of tallow[[,]] and water[[-]]soluble proteins, ~~and moisture~~ in said heated slurry.

17. (Currently Amended) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 16, further comprising a step of:

(a) feeding the liquids stream from the decanter to a separator and separating the liquids stream into a heavy phase and a light phase, the heavy phase containing an increased weight[[-]]percent of moisture and water[[-]]soluble proteins compared to the weight[[-]]percent of moisture and water[[-]]soluble proteins in the liquids stream, and the light phase containing an increased weight-percent of tallow compared with the weight[[-]]percent of tallow in the liquids stream.

18. (Original) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 17, further comprising a step of combining the solids stream and the heavy phase to provide a meat product.
19. (Original) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 16, wherein the heat transfer fluid comprises water.
20. (Original) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 16, wherein the heat transfer fluid comprises tallow.
21. (New) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 19, wherein the heat transfer fluid is provided at a temperature of between about 82°C and about 93°C.
22. (New) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 20, wherein the heat transfer fluid is provided at a temperature greater than about 100°C.
23. (New) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 20, wherein the heat transfer fluid is provided at a temperature of between about 115°C and about 150°C.
24. (New) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 16, wherein the step of separating a solids stream and a liquids stream from the heated slurry is provided by a decanter.
25. (New) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 18, wherein said meat product has a fat content of less than about 30%; a protein content of greater than about 14%; and a protein efficiency ratio of about 2.5 or higher or an essential amino acid content of at least 33% of the total amino acids.
26. (New) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 18, wherein said meat product has an essential amino acids content of at least 33% of the total amino acids.
27. (New) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 16, wherein the meat product is frozen within about 30 minutes of said step of heating animal trimmings in a heat exchanger.

28. (New) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 16, wherein the animal trimmings have a lean content of at least 37%, by weight.

29. (New) A low temperature rendering process according to claim 16, wherein the animal trimmings have a lean content of at least 39%, by weight.

Support for Amendment

Claim 16 is amended to refer to a "heat transfer fluid" at line 3 and to remove hyphens. In addition, claim 16 is amended to remove the characterization in step (c) of "feeding the heated slurry to a decanter." This feature is introduced by dependent claim 24. In addition, claim 16 is amended to remove reference to increasing or decreasing the amount of "moisture" in the solids stream or the liquids stream relative to the heated slurry. Claim 16 is additionally amended to characterize the heating media used to surface treat the animal trimmings as a bath. This amendment is supported by the specification at page 20, lines 5-9.

Claim 17 is amended to remove hyphens and is amended at line 2 to refer to "a step of."

New claims 21-23 are supported by the specification at page 20, lines 20-29.

New claim 24 is supported by the specification at page 15, line 32 through page 16, line 3.

New claims 25 and 26 are supported by the specification at page 11, lines 8-20.

New claim 27 is supported by the specification at page 16, lines 14-17.

New claims 28 and 29 are supported by the specification at page 6, lines 16-23.

No new matter is introduced by the above Amendment, and entry thereof is requested.

Upon entry, claims 16-29 are active in this application.